

Mogens Møller

Stalke Project
Nørregade 7C, Copenhagen

to 30.4.1988

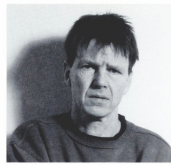
Mogens Møller's exhibition at Stalke Project in 1988 was reviewed in several Danish newspapers, where the focus was placed on his sculptural practice and his investigation of form, symbolism, and spatial presence.

In Weekendavisen, the exhibition was discussed in relation to Møller's position within Danish sculpture, with particular emphasis on his jar- and vase-shaped sculptures and their references to both antiquity and more speculative, contemporary visual worlds. The review pointed out how the works combine historical associations with a subdued and meditative material language. (Weekendavisen, "Spot på Mogens Møller".)

The exhibition was also mentioned in Jyllands-Posten, where Møller's installation at Stalke Project was linked to his overall artistic practice and his work with symbolic form, transformation, and scale. The review highlighted how the sculptures activate the exhibition space and invite reflection on time, tradition, and abstraction. (Jyllands-Posten, culture section, 1988.)

Taken together, these press reviews document Mogens Møller's exhibition at Stalke Project as part of the contemporary Danish art debate at the end of the 1980s and situate his work in relation to broader discussions of sculpture, materiality, and historical reference.





MOGENS MØLLER
F. 1934,
DANMARK



THE STORM BELL.

The sculpture is called The Storm Bell. It concerns warning systems in two ways: historically and in the present. A little further up the street, with the name "Ved Stormklokken" (By the Storm Bell), the city's largest bell, "The Storm Bell," used to hang. When the enemy invaded or a fire broke out, the bell rang across the city to alert and summon help. The damages and disasters caused by war or fire had something directly observable about them—one could even say something local—where everyone knew who or what had caused the damage. This meant that the city's residents could take direct action against something that was happening and had a tangible cause.

The sculpture is called The Storm Bell, and the man walks and stands on "history."

Under his feet are parts of buildings such as roofs, walls, and pillars. Through the oval window, on one side, a stylized flame flickers, while on the other, the beginning of a sword protrudes.

With this theme, I aim to link the sculpture to its place.

We can all rejoice that, precisely these days in Haderslev, the old "gossip well" has been rediscovered in the town square! We rejoice because, through the centuries, we can imagine the people exchanging words at the well about this and that.

Today, no such well exists—it has been replaced by many other "wells," one of which is Haderslev Radio.

The Storm Bell, too, is gone, replaced by other and much more complex, often global, warning systems, systems that require experts and large organizations to operate and manage—and where the individual feels helpless.

When local politicians in the 1960s, armed with fine calculations, competed with one another in prestige projects, it was difficult for the individual to say no with a compelling argument.

And when we now look at the last empty eleven floors of, for instance, Herlev Hospital, we can no more connect them with the old sword, or ring a bell to "extinguish" the hole in the ozone layer with a bucket of water.

What was once near and tangible in The Storm Bell's time has now become distant and intangible.

For me—and surely for most others—it has become difficult to understand the world. In the age of mass media, we have the whole world on the screen in our living rooms in an instant—but the screen is not the same as standing by the well. The screen is an illusion, and through mass repetition, the boundary between fiction and reality is erased.

"Dallas" and "Dollars" become as real or unreal as Chernobyl and the Iran-Contra affair.

The sculpture is called The Storm Bell, and it exists in the age of illusion and mass information. A time with information about anything and everything, sending us in all directions simultaneously, even as we realize that everything is distant and intangible.

For that reason, I wish to place a new Storm Bell—a different perception of the world than that of "the expert," science, and the large organizations.

The sculpture is called The Storm Bell, and the man carries an egg. One can interpret the event in any way—like the fairy tales of "Seven-League Boots" or "The Flying Trunk"—or as a hybrid creation.

The man appears "androgynous"—it is unclear whether he is entering or leaving his origin.

The distance between the sculpture's individual expressions of architecture, body, and egg is too great for it to express a cohesive meaning about the world and its place. The sculpture lacks an overarching center to hold its parts together, and its direction and placement on the small square fail to connect with other meaning-creating parts of the city.

One could say that when a bell rings—whether deeply or loudly—it does so because of something external to the sculpture, between the observer and the sculpture.

The sculpture expresses absence. The world is not within—but outside the image. The absent is present in the sculpture, at the edge from which the viewer continues. Thus, it becomes both an internal and an empty riddle, provoking and attracting other riddles.

Stalke Note, 1988



Mogens Møller 1988, Stalke Archive photo